

Critical Incidents - Effects on Human Behavior

Definitions

Critical incident: An event which is outside the NORMAL human experience.

Examples: shootings, officer injury, gun take-a-ways, child deaths, mass homicides, officer suicide, etc.

Post Traumatic Stress: NORMAL REACTION to an ABNORMAL SITUATION.

Examples: Normal physical ailments as well as normal emotional responses, such as anger, helplessness, and fear.

It is often helpful to understand the normal physiological responses (time distortion, altered visual and auditory perceptions) that occur during and immediately after the event.

The purpose of these pages is to advise members of the normal reactions to a critical incident. Not all individuals experience an event the same way. Some individuals exhibit some of the physical symptoms and some individuals experience some of the physiological symptoms. Not all individuals experience all of the symptoms. These pages will address any and all of the responses as normal.

It is the intent of SFPD's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) to offer information and support to those members involved in critical incidents.

Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) 837-0875

Employee Assistance Unit 837-0875

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team, on-call pager 201-7335

You can also talk to any SFPD Peer Support Member or Critical Incident Response Team Member.

If symptoms persist, contact the Behavioral Science Unit for a referral to one of our Police Psychologists or a professional through your own health plan. Members, their spouses/significant others, and children are covered for outpatient services through their health plan by United Behavioral Health (UBH). Your benefits give you easy access to professional, confidential, help, whether you are facing stress on the job or difficult personal concerns, such as family problems or depression.

Phone UBH, 24 hrs/day at (800) 888-2998 for assistance

All referrals, whether through UBH or through the Behavioral Science Unit, are confidential